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BLM ALASKA
FRONTIERS
It's BACK!
Issue 101 • Winter 2007-2008
News about BLM-managed public lands in Alaska

BLM Alaska

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Join us as America celebrates the

Iditarod National Historic Trail Centennial!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

http://www.iditarod nationalhistorictrail.org

CENTENNIAL INFORMATION

http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/sa/iditarod.html

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Please subscribe to receive future print issues of BLM-Alaska Frontiers. Subscription Form is on page 11.

IDITAROD NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL CENTENNIAL

Kevin Keeler

The year 2008 marks the 100th anniversary of the start of Alaska Road Commission efforts to open an overland route from Seward to Nome. First scouted in 1908, the Iditarod Trail was completed by crews working through mid-winter temperatures of minus 50°F in 1910 and 1911. Within a year, thousands of gold-seekers hiked or mushed the government trail to the Iditarod gold fields, and gold-carrying sled dog teams became a regular sight on the trail. As a result of population increases from the rush to the Last Frontier, Congress in 1912 elevated Alaska to Territorial status. In 1978, Congress designated the Iditarod National Historic Trail. To commemorate these epic achievements of yesteryear, an interagency and partner working group for the Iditarod National Historic Trail selected January 2008 to October 2012 as the official Trail Centennial.

BLM-Alaska is the U.S. Congress-designated Administrator for the Iditarod National Historic Trail, and the BLM Anchorage Field Office is playing an integral role in Centennial celebrations and planning. Field office staff are producing a color newsprint Iditarod Trail visitor guide (similar to the BLM Dalton Highway guide) and will feature transportation on the Trail on the April 2008 Archeology Month poster.

—see IDITAROD CENTENNIAL on page 2

Alaska

Kevin Keeler

Unalakleet Student Broadcast Team member Mia Concilus interviews an Idita-rider at the BLM Campbell Creek Science Center for a Bering Straits School District nationwide video-conference during the 2007 Iditarod Sled Dog Race.

When the Iditarod Sled Dog Race ceremonial start begins on 4th Avenue in Anchorage on March 1, special guests and a re-enactment sled will "kick-off" the Centennial.

During the race, the Anchorage Field Office will participate in 12 twice-daily videoconferences hosted by the Bering Straits School District and broadcast nationwide. Last year, about 5,000 students from 180 schools throughout North America took part in the videoconferences. BLM provides maps, photography, and commentary on the historic trail in the broadcasts. If your favorite school would like to participate in these two-way learning events, go to http://mushing.bssd.org/

BLM partners are busy planning other events. Seward is hosting a statewide "Iditarod Days" celebration on February 2 and 3, including a reenactment of the start of the Road Commission's expedition from Seward to Nome on January 31, 1908, sled dog rides and outdoor events, movies, presentations, and more that you won't want to miss. This exciting activity is sponsored by the Seward Iditarod Trailblazers, Chamber of Commerce, and Chugach National Forest Seward Ranger District.

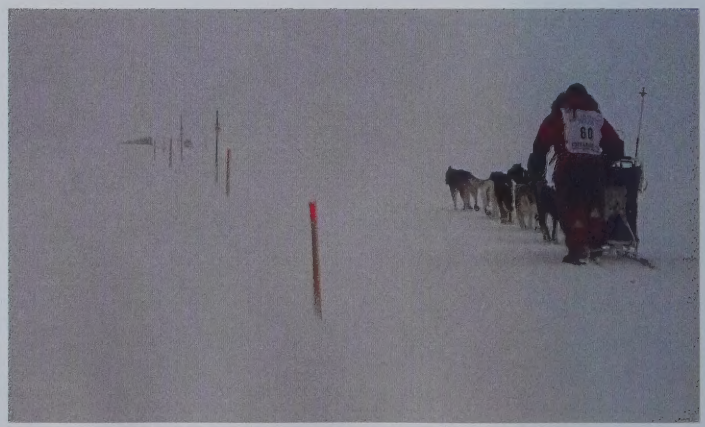
BLM is helping the Anchorage Museum of Art with a new exhibit scheduled February 29 to September on "Iditarod Visionary Joe Redington, Sr.," a collection of memorabilia from the 'Father of the Iditarod' and his work to get the trail designated as a National Historic Trail.

BLM staff members are providing Special Recreation Permit management and law enforcement assistance for long-distance events occurring on the trail. These include:

- **Iditarod Trail Invitational**, a human-powered ultra-marathon and the world's longest ultra race of 350 miles or 1100 miles Knik to McGrath, or Knik to Nome, that starts in February.
- **Norman Vaughan Serum Run** combines a dog team/snowmachine journey from Nenana to Nome, a distance of 776 miles, that commemorates the 20 men and their dog teams who relayed crucial diphtheria serum to Nome in 1925. The run also increases awareness on the need for immunizations.
- **Tesoro Iron Dog Snowmachine Race** in February is the world's longest at 2,000 miles, racing from Big Lake to Nome in 5 days, and then on to Fairbanks in another 5 days.
- **Iditarod Sled Dog Race**, often called "The Last Great Race on Earth," is the first Saturday in March with a ceremonial start in Anchorage, and official start on Sunday from either Willow or Wasilla. Most dog teams mush more than 1150 miles in 10 to 17 days.

Other BLM field staff work to keep the National Historic Trail in shape year-round. This includes annual maintenance of four remote public shelter cabins and this year's installation of 25 miles of trail safety markers on the blizzard-prone Kaltag Portage.

–Kevin Keeler, BLM Iditarod Trail Coordinator
kkeeler@blm.gov



Kevin Keeler

Trail conditions can be brutal out on the trail with below- freezing temperatures and low visability.

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Tom Lonnie: Geologist at the Helm

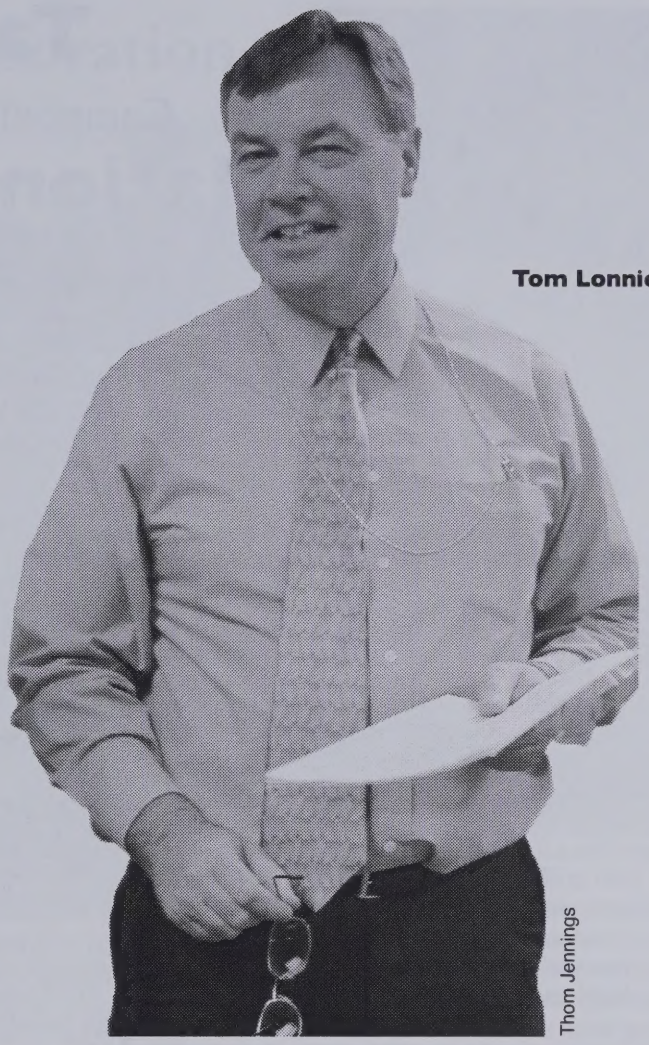
BLM-ALASKA'S STATE DIRECTOR

On a balmy afternoon following Thanksgiving, BLM-Alaska State Director Thomas Lonnie sat down to discuss his impressions of Alaska and reflect on his first year on the job. He had just returned from sharing the holidays with family in New York, and wryly smiled as he acknowledged how Anchorage's hours of sunlight seemed so fleeting after his trip Outside.

He said he had also realized with some surprise that it had been exactly a year since he relocated to Alaska from Washington D.C. and after leaving his job as BLM's Assistant Director for Minerals, Realty, and Resource Protection to assume the directorship vacated by Henri Bisson, now BLM Deputy Director for Operations.

As a geologist by trade, Alaska has felt like the ideal job for Lonnie. His background leads him to appreciate Alaska's public lands and their resources. His voice warms as he describes the many people, issues, and events he's encountered here. He has come to be very familiar with the issues and concerns with access to public lands and managing for multiple uses. He's helped guide an agency that recently went through a major reorganization, and shows concern, shaking his head slowly, when discussing the shrinking federal budgets and the monumental challenges that creates for BLM-Alaska and his work as State Director.

Lonnie also expressed pride at the work of BLM-Alaska staff on resource management planning and getting these plans reviewed and out to the public, including for the East Alaska Area Resource Management Plan Record of Decision; the Kobuk-Seward Peninsula, Ring of Fire and Bay Proposed RMPs/Final EISs; and the Northeast National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Supplemental Integrated Activity Plan. These and other area plans address mineral exploration and development, sustainable habitat and subsistence uses, mineral entry, location and status of land transfers, recreational use, access, and special designations.



Tom Lonnie

Thom Jennings

Lonnie has worked to see BLM-Alaska meet the legal mandates for land transfers, and is watching energy developments very closely. BLM-Alaska has participated in development of the Department of the Interior's business plan to define roles and responsibilities for any future Alaska natural gas pipeline.

There were many other issues Lonnie could have discussed, but the sunset was already painting Anchorage and the surrounding mountains in alpenglow, his next appointment had arrived, and the time for reflection was over.

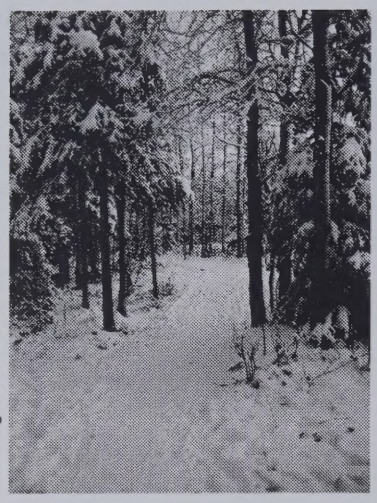
What's Happening with Alaska Land Transfers?

BLM-Alaska is responsible for transferring title of federal public lands to individual Alaska Natives, Native corporations, and the State of Alaska.

As of Sept. 14, 2007, the State has received title to 93.6 million acres; 10.9 million acres must still be conveyed, and 54.5 million acres require additional surveying before final patents can be issued. Under the *Alaska Statehood Act*, the State of Alaska's total land entitlement is 104.5 million acres.

As of Sept. 14, 2007, Alaska Native corporations have received title to 38.4 million acres; 7.7 million acres must still be conveyed, and 23.4 million acres require cadastral surveys. The BLM estimates that the field survey work in support of these plats is 75 percent complete. Under the *Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act*, Native corporations are entitled to 46 million acres of federal public land.

As of Sept. 14, 2007, 12,336 certificates of allotment have been issued, and 1,063 parcels are still pending under the Native Allotment Act of 1906. Individual Alaska Natives have applied for 17,061 allotment parcels.



Anchorage Field Office

Take It Outside!

Campbell Tract is home to Alaska's newest National Recreation Trail

If you live in the Anchorage bowl and love the outdoors, chances are you are among the more than 140,000 trail users who visited the BLM's Campbell Tract outdoor recreation trails in 2007, an average annual increase of 5%-10% over the past five years. You may know these trails well. What you might NOT know is that this year Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne named Campbell Tract Loop Trail as Alaska's newest National Recreation Trail. The designation recognizes the importance of the Campbell Tract Loop Trail to Anchorage residents and America's national system of trails.

What are National Recreation Trails?

The *National Trails System Act of 1968* gave the Secretary of the Interior authority to recognize exemplary trails of local and regional significance as **National Recreation Trails**. America's network of over 900 National Recreation Trails includes all 50 states and more than 11,000 miles of trails. These trails provide outdoor recreation activities in urban and rural settings. National Recreation Trails may qualify for funding under Challenge Cost Share programs and corporate sponsorship. Urban/wildland interface trails like the Loop Trail encourage residents to get out and connect with their public lands. The trails promote healthy families and healthy lands, respect, and stewardship for public lands. Visit www.AmericanTrails.org/NationalRecreationTrails for participating trails.

Get to know Alaska's newest National Recreation Trail

Campbell Tract Loop Trail is on BLM-Alaska's scenic 730-acre Campbell Tract and is the second National Recreation Trail on BLM public lands in Alaska. Three popular trails on Campbell Tract: Moose Track, Viewpoint, and Lynx, comprise the 3.4-mile Campbell Tract Loop Trail. The trails include both improved and natural surface trails that are open year-round for non-motorized recreational activities, such as mountain biking, skijoring, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, equestrian use, walking, and hiking. The Loop Trail is a great place to see wildlife, including black and brown bear, lynx, moose, bald eagles, owls, coyotes, and the occasional wolf.

Anchorage Field Office

BLM outdoor recreation planner Doug Ballou oversees the day-to-day management of Campbell Tract's more than 12 miles of outdoor recreation trails. "The Campbell Tract provides a critical link to Anchorage's urban trails and surrounding municipal and state park lands," Ballou explains. "You can park at the trailhead and head out in any number of directions. So the Loop Trail is a great place to start your adventure."

Alaska's military history buffs are in for a treat when they visit Campbell Tract Loop Trail. "The trail encompasses Campbell Airstrip, an active 5,000-foot runway originally constructed as a satellite field to Elmendorf Field in 1942," Ballou explains. "Portions of the Loop Trail follow taxiways and tank trails dating back to World War II."

A community resource

The Campbell Tract trail system is a model of stewardship through partnership. Each year, thousands of volunteers help with trail upgrades and maintenance activities during National Trails Day, National Public Lands Day, and similar events. Ten partner organizations and user groups regularly provide trail maintenance assistance. From health and fitness to educating children and families about nature, the Campbell Tract trails play an important role in the everyday life, education, and health of thousands of Anchorage residents and visitors. Designating the Campbell Tract Loop Trail a National Recreation Trail, the 16th such trail in Alaska, is a key step in fostering appreciation for this important resource.

–Teresa McPherson
Anchorage Field Office
teresa_mcpherson@blm.gov

Why "Take It Outside"?

The BLM kicked off a new initiative this year to "Take it Outside–Connect with Your Public Lands."

What does this mean to you? The "Take It Outside" initiative focuses on schools, youth organizations, and families. Whether you're a parent or teacher, Scout or Scout leader, or making family plans for the weekend, the BLM invites you to connect with your public lands at BLM's Campbell Tract.

Not sure how to get started?

- Visit www.blm.gov/ak and use the Campbell Creek Science Center link for ideas.
- Stop by the BLM Anchorage Field Office at 6881 Elmore Road (formerly Abbott Loop Road) and pick up a free trail map.
- Call (907) 267-1246 if you'd like to know more.

A Journey of Glacial Exploration

Danielle Allen

Southern University research team and other researchers at Bering Glacier

left to right: (front row) Nancy Auer–MTU; (second row) Sylvia Espino–MTU; (third row) Chris Noyles–BLM, Bob Shuchman–MTRI, Kevin Endsley–MTU, Jacquole Landry–SU; Mykel Delandro–SU; Revathi Hines-SU; Alaa Shams–SU; (fourth row) Lionel Lyles–SU; John Gierke-MTU; Josh Richardson-MTU; and Scott Guyer-BLM. Not shown: Pamela Brue–SU and Michael Stubblefield–SU.

SU = Southern University; MTU=Michigan Tech University; MTRI=Michigan Tech Research Institute

Southern University joins BLM's Bering Glacier Camp

In early August after almost a week, a Southern University research team left BLM's research camp at the Bering Glacier in southeast Alaska with experiences they will never forget. At the invitation of the BLM, they had traded the blistering heat of Baton Rouge for Alaska's cooler temperatures. Bush plane and helicopter rides, glimpses of seals on icebergs, and the Bering Glacier up-close and personal were perks of the job.

But it was the hands-on experience, explains Mykel Delandro, which brought the mechanical engineering student to the Bering camp. Jacquole Landry, a civil engineering major, saw the applicability of their Bering field work to their work as students, while Alaa Shams, a GIS and remote sensing trainer and analyst, said it was a lifetime experience to be there and mapping Bering Glacier's terminus.

Their enthusiasm is understandable. The Bering Glacier, largest in the western hemisphere, is home to scientists for several weeks each summer who study its unique ecosystems, rapid retreat, and its effect on global warming.

Southern University's vice chancellor of research, Michael Stubblefield, reflected on their visit from the camp's cook tent. He said although this initial trip was more of a fact-finding expedition, he was sold on the research being done at Bering Glacier.

Stubblefield explained that Southern University's coastal zone assessment program, which includes fisheries studies and the use of GIS and remote sensing in its research, mirrors much of what is being done at Bering Glacier. He said the Bering Glacier melt could be supporting wetlands loss on the Louisiana gulf coast. He sees future collaborative research opportunities between Southern University and the BLM.

After somewhat acclimatizing to living in tents, using outhouses, and bugs, the Southern University students took their daily assignments in stride. Lionel Lyles, associate professor and director of public policy for Southern University, said the group assisted different researchers each day at the camp. They went out in boats on Vitus Lake, which fronts the glacier, and took water samples to determine the health of the lake and fish. They flew out to the glacier and installed seismic sensors to track the glacier's movement. They hiked into the back country with botanists to help catalog vegetation never before identified, accompanied by a shotgun-toting companion to protect them from bears.

Their measurements mapping the leading edge of the glacier showed that the Bering Glacier retreated 0.52 miles from 2006 to 2007. Stubblefield explains that such ice carving is causing sea levels to rise along

—see BERING on page 11

Summer Season in Alaska's Sun?

Check out these temporary/volunteer/student work opportunities

It's only a mouseclick away.

Seasonal

You can find most summer jobs and vacancies with BLM-Alaska on the internet at USAJOBS. Deadlines vary, start checking now for the following summer.

Here's how:

1. **Go to http;//www.usajobs.opm.gov/**
2. **Click on the SEARCH JOBS tab.**
3. **Enter "Bureau of Land Management" under KEYWORD SEARCH.**
4. **Select "AK" under LOCATION SEARCH.**
5. **Scroll down to click on SEARCH FOR JOBS.**

This gives you a list of jobs in BLM-Alaska. Click on the job title to view a vacancy announcement. Check carefully for seasonal and temporary positions. To apply, follow instructions on the vacancy announcement.

BLM-Alaska Fire Service and wildland fire seasonal jobs (including forestry technician/smokejumper positions) are posted from October-January of each year on http://www.firejobs.doi.gov/

Volunteer

BLM-Alaska involves volunteers in many projects, from serving as campground hosts in scenic areas like Paxson Lake or the Dalton Highway, to working in an office in Anchorage. Volunteers conduct orientation sessions for BLM's Coldfoot Interagency Visitor's Center; repair trails at Campbell Tract; help with special events like the 2008-2012 Iditarod National Historic Trail Centennial; and projects such as energy and minerals, archaeology and history, botanical inventories, administrative support, fish and wildlife, environmental education, and more.

For more information about BLM-Alaska's Volunteer Program, contact Gene Ervine, (907) 271-3342, e-mail eugene_ervine@blm.gov, or check out http://www.blm.gov/ak/voluntr.html/

Special Hiring Opportunities

You may be eligible for jobs where hiring takes place outside of the vacancy announcement process as noncompetitive appointments under special hiring authorities including the Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP), Veterans Readjustment Authority, hiring authority for 30% disabled veterans, people with disabilities, and returned Peace Corps/VISTA volunteers. To find out more about special noncompetitive hiring authorities, visit www.usajobs.opm.gov

Contact the BLM office where you want to work for information about what kinds of jobs may be available and how to apply.

–Information contributed by Ruth Egnaty

Great news!
BLM-Alaska has student jobs

Did you know that BLM-Alaska has educational programs where students are hired to work while still in school–gaining work experience and pay and benefits? BLM-Alaska's student educational employment program has a Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) and a Student Career Experience Program (SCEP).

To qualify, you must:

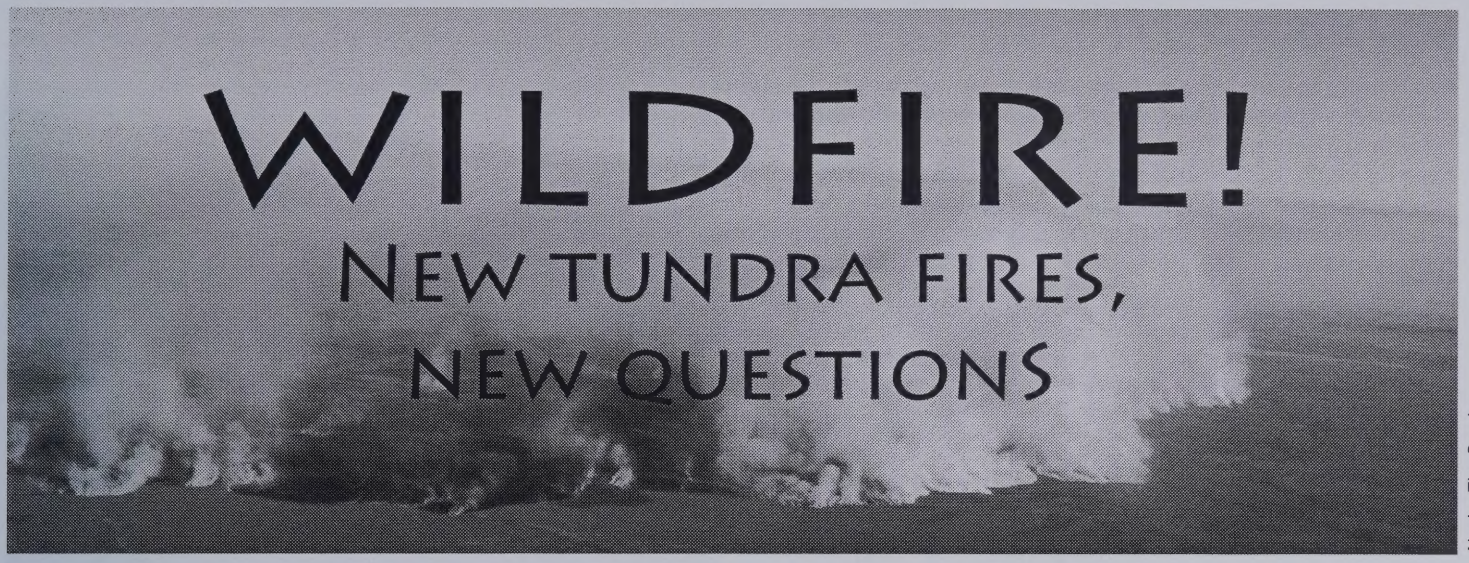
- Be accepted to obtain a diploma, certificate or degree;
- Be enrolled at least half-time in an accredited high school, technical or vocational school, 2- or 4-year college or university, graduate or professional school; and maintain good academic standing.
- Be a U.S. citizen.

STEP students are hired as temporary Federal employees. Job duties do not have to relate to academic career goals. Rates of pay depend on current education, work experience, and other position requirements. STEP students are also entitled to benefits such as paid vacation days, holidays and sick leave.

SCEP students are hired in jobs related to their academic career goals. The SCEP is a partnership between a student, their school, and Alaska-BLM. SCEP students combine academic studies with practical, on-the-job experience in their field of study. A SCEP student's initial rate of pay will depend upon education and work experience. SCEP students receive Federal employee benefits such as paid vacation days, holidays, and sick leave; health and life insurance; retirement plans; and possibly training and tuition assistance. Some SCEP students become permanent BLM-Alaska employees after they graduate and complete the SCEP work requirements.

WILDFIRE!

NEW TUNDRA FIRES, NEW QUESTIONS



Alaska Fire Service

The North Slope tundra does not usually have dramatic fire seasons, and wildfires are rare events. Since 1956, the Alaska Fire Service recorded only 134 fires north of latitude 68 degrees.

So what happened this year? Until late September, the North Slope fire season looked typically tame. Then the **Anaktuvuk River fire** roared to life! Not only was the fire a whopping 256,734 acres and the largest in Alaska this year, but the fire burned all the way from the coastal plain to the foothills of the Brooks Range. Combined with several smaller fires, this year's Anaktuvuk River fire was larger than the total acres burned by tundra fires since record-keeping began in the 1950s. This September was the second-warmest on record, and with only half of the normal precipitation.

As thick smoke from the Anaktuvuk River fire caused concern in North Slope villages, the fire's size and duration raised important questions among fire ecologists. Was this weather related to another unusual event of 2007–the record retreat of arctic pack ice from the coast? Will these conditions persist? Will large fires become more frequent on the North Slope? If so, how will more fires affect plants, wildlife, and communities?

These questions and more about the Anaktuvuk River fire continue to interest scientists, North Slope residents and local governments involved in fire management. The Alaska Fire Service hosted meetings with North Slope stakeholders during October's Alaska Federation of Natives Convention and in Barrow and in Anaktuvuk Pass to talk about the Anaktuvuk River fire and fire management roles and responsibilities for North Slope communities.

Alaska Fire Service

Discovering how tundra recovers

What happens to the tundra after it burns? In the past, scientists researched the early growth of plants after tundra fires, including changes in how they reproduce, their active layer depth, and the availability of nutrients.

These studies show tundra plants that have roots, stems, and leaves, especially cottongrass, recovered with luxuriant flowering within two years after a burn. Active layers increased up to 50% by the following June, and 99% of regeneration was from re-sprouting and not from seeds. A 1999 study showed most plants that have roots, stems, and leaves recovered within 23 years of fire in tussock tundra.

None of these studies were long enough to learn about recovery for slower-growing tundra plants like mosses, liverworts, and hornworts that don't have leaves and roots or require water for fertilization.

Recently, BLM staff Randi Jandt, Kyle Joly, Jeanie Cole and Randy Meyers (now retired) re-measured plots from 1972 to 1981 tundra fires

—see WILDFIRE on page 8

to identify regeneration rates for the slower growing species, especially "reindeer" lichens. They are finding that 34 years after a tundra fire, BLM's plots have only about 1% lichen cover in areas that previously had more than 40%.

Canadian studies support these findings. They show reindeer lichen take more than 100 years to reach their peak levels following fire. Lichens and mosses grow slowly and depend on atmospheric moisture for growth. They are easily outcompeted where conditions are good for the faster-growing plants.

Plants with roots, stems, and leaves continue to dominate regeneration of tundra plants in the burned areas, changing the ecosystem.

There's more. One 2004 study found diamond leaf willow colonized a 1977 burn on the Seward Peninsula, but another study found no colonies of new species after tundra fires in 1968 and 1969.

Fire (and maybe grazing) provides a rapid catalyst for the faster-growing plants to thrive. Even areas without fire damage appear to have declining lichen and moss cover.

Since the late 1970s, northwestern and arctic Alaska have been significantly warmer. Interestingly, tundra warming experiments in greenhouses at Toolik Lake have produced exactly the kind of changes scientists are starting to pick up in their field studies.

The Anatuvuk River Fire is challenging scientists to find out even-more about tundra regeneration, widespread plant changes, and the impact of these changes on wildlife after a fire.

–Randi Jandt
Alaska Fire Service
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Information also contributed by
Mary Lynch, Alaska Fire Service

Alaska Fire Service

Heavy smoke and Alaska Fire Service helicopter.

BRIDGES TO SOMEWHERE: SCOUTS LEARN and BUILD

Hikers at BLM's Cripple Creek Campground on the Steese Highway have three new bridges to cross, thanks to a Fairbanks Boy Scout troop. Tom Walmsley of Troop 1 organized the project with Eastern Interior Field Office staff as part of his requirements for the rank of Eagle Scout. About 25 scouts and 12 adults contributed time to the project during three weekends in late September. The scouts dismantled old bridges at the site before assembling pre-fabricated fiberglass bridges that are wider and sturdier.

–Craig McCaa
Fairbanks District Office
Craig_McCaa@blm.gov

Collin Gogley

Boy Scout Tom Walmsley (far right) with fellow members of Boy Scout Troop 1 in Fairbanks on one of the three new bridges they constructed at BLM's Cripple Creek Campground on the Steese Highway.

Keeping Alaska's Goldrush Alive!

Cabin Restored at Historic Steele Creek

Robin Mills

A glimpse of yesteryear -- the restored Steele Creek front cabin.

In 1886 the discovery of gold at Franklin Bar on the Fortymile River sparked interior Alaska's first gold rush. Strategically located where the Eagle-Valdez Trail crossed the Fortymile River, the Steele Creek community served as an important "transportation hub and community center" during the peak of the region's gold mining activity.

Today, the Fortymile River and some of its tributaries are designated as part of the Wild and Scenic Rivers System under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980.

The remaining goldrush-era structures of the Steele Creek community include a roadhouse, post office, and a large cabin made of two separate cabins, one in front of the other.

Last summer, BLM archeologist Robin Mills organized a collaborative effort to restore the goldrush-era front main cabin at Fortymile's historic Steele Creek community. Gary Titus, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service cabin restoration specialist, led a crew of ten BLM Eastern Interior Field Office employees from August 15 to 22 on the project.

Titus made it clear to his crew that the restoration was not only to save the cabin from decay, but to preserve the structure's historic integrity.

The crew carefully took out the floor boards, lifted the cabin with hydraulic jacks, and removed rotted logs.

Highlighting the difficulty of the project, the cabin shifted when it was jacked up and the area lacked a supply of straight logs. The crew harvested their replacement logs from nearby trees, notched them on the spot, and installed them by fitting each log into the notches of the logs above, working from the top down.

Once the new logs were in place, the crew lowered the cabin onto eight cement pier blocks set on rock foundations. The blocks prevent the cabin from sinking by supporting its weight. The blocks also raise the sill logs above the ground, allowing air circulation beneath the cabin and reducing the chances of rotting. The crew left a four-inch gap between the ground and the sill logs, backfilling dirt around the cabin's base to hide the pier blocks.

Finally, using many of the original floor boards, the crew re-installed the floor and used moss to chink any spaces between the logs.

This year's successful front main cabin restoration will make way for future projects at the Steele Creek community to restore the main back cabin and possibly the roadhouse.

Although the crew sustained no major injuries, one employee found himself face-to-face with a black bear. Fortunately, neither man nor bear was interested in continuing the encounter.

–Nathan Dorpalen
Seasonal BLM-Alaska employee
Eastern Interior Field Office

Kevan Cooper

Steve Lanford and John Dube prepare logs, while Gary Titus (FWS) shows off a log just set in place.

FRONTIERS Flashes

Late-breaking news from around Alaska

OFF-LIMITS: CAMPBELL TRACT AIRSTRIP AND HELIPORT

There is nothing like preparing to land your aircraft and finding people standing around or a private plane sitting on the airstrip! No more! In a *Federal Register* notice published Dec. 14, the BLM legally closed Campbell Airstrip and heliport to unauthorized recreation use by private aircraft and people walking onto the airstrip, after signs and outreach efforts failed to keep people safely out of aviation areas. The airstrip and heliport are used by the BLM and other federal agencies. Formal closure was the next step in educating visitors that aviation areas at Campbell Tract are unsafe for recreational use and violators will be cited.

Upcoming Events (you won't want to miss)

January	
10	UNDERSTANDING THE COSMOS with astronomer Jeff Medkeff – Campbell Creek Science Center Astronomy Series
12-15	COPPER BASIN 300 Sled Dog Race
10-13	CANTWELL CLASSIC Sled Dog Race
23	PORCUPINES with Jessy Coltraine, ADF&G wildlife biologist–Campbell Creek Science Center Fireside Chat Series
February	
2-3	IDITAROD DAYS in Seward and kickoff of the 2008-2012 Iditarod National Historic Trail Centennial
9	YUKON QUEST International Sled Dog Race starts in Fairbanks
10	TESORO IRON DOG snowmachine race starts from Big Lake to Nome to Fairbanks, world's longest at about 2,000 miles
11-13	ALASKA FORUM ON THE ENVIRONMENT CONFERENCE – Alaska Fire Service exhibit booth in Anchorage
14	PLANETS with UAA physics-astronomy professor Dr. Travis Rector – Campbell Creek Science Center Astronomy Series
16	WINTER TRAILS DAY – Campbell Creek Science Center
20	VIKINGS, GLACIERS, and CLIMATE CHANGE with UAA geology professor Dr. Kristine Crossen – Campbell Creek Science Center Astronomy Series
23	JUNIOR IDITAROD SLED DOG RACE
24	IDITAROD TRAIL INVITATIONAL ultra sport race challenge from Knik 350 miles to McGrath or 1100 miles to Nome
March	
1-2	IDITAROD SLED DOG RACE begins. First race of the 2008-2012 Iditarod National Historic Trail Centennial
2-12	IDITAROD SLED DOG RACE to Nome
14-16	OPEN NORTH AMERICAN CHAMPIONSHIP SLED DOG RACE downtown Fairbanks
22-23	TOK RACE of CHAMPIONS

Ongoing recreational opportunities (Take it Outside!), exhibits and materials in BLM public rooms and visitor centers, website resources, and more!

WEED STRATEGY

BLM-Alaska continues to fight the escalating war on weeds and invasive plants. As a charter member of the **Anchorage Weed Management Group,** BLM-Alaska joins public and private landowners throughout the Anchorage bowl in the ongoing battle to prevent the spread of weeds. BLM-Alaska will work with other federal agencies, the Municipality of Anchorage, the Alaska Division of Forestry, and the nonprofit Citizens Against Noxious Weeds Invading the North (CANWIN) to develop a comprehensive weed management plan.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANS: WHAT'S HAPPENING?

- **East Alaska:** The Record of Decision was signed on September 7, 2007.
- **Ring of Fire:** BLM published the Notice of Availability for the Proposed RMP (Resource Management Plan)/Final EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) in August 2006; BLM received two protests. Protest resolution and the Record of Decision are near completion.
- **Kobuk-Seward Peninsula:** The protest period for the Proposed RMP/EIS ended on October 29, 2007. BLM received six protests. Protest resolution is currently underway.
- **Bay: BLM released t**he Notice of Availability for the Proposed RMP/EIS on December 7, 2007. The 30-day protest period will end on January 7, 2008, and the Governor's Consistency Review will end on February 6, 2008.
- **Northeast National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska:** The public comment period for the Draft Supplemental Integrated Activity Plan/EIS ended November 6, 2007; BLM's comment response process is underway.
- **Colville River:** BLM-Alaska has begun work on the management plan and environmental assessment for the Colville River Special Area scheduled for public release May 16, 2008.

Bering —*continued from page 5*

the coast of Louisiana and other low-lying regions.

Echoing Stubblefield, Lyles also said that what's happening at the Bering Glacier is a global issue. "Daily, 30,000 cubic feet per second of freshwater are emptied into the Pacific Ocean," says Lyles. "This situation, if not reversed, could lead to the permanent inundation of major American cities such as New Orleans, Houston and Manhattan..."

Rivarthi Hines, Southern's associate professor of political science and geography, was awestruck by the glacier. Listening to Lyles, Hines agreed, explaining that "If we don't take care of our environment, other generations will not be able to experience it."

Lyles adds, "BLM has an opportunity to share with the world information on public land that contains the largest glacier, [and] which could reverse the livelihoods and health of millions of people as it relates to erosion and sea level rise."

By the end of their week in Alaska, the Southern University team had participated in water quality and bathymetry of Vitus Lake, glaciology, seismology resistivity measurements, abalation research and botanical studies. They are applying what they learned in Alaska to ongoing research studies at Southern University, including the relationship between the deteriorating wetlands along the Mississippi River Basin and the Louisiana Gulf Coast.

Scott Guyer, the Bering camp project leader who helped facilitate the university team's trip to the glacier camp, says he wants to expand the involvement of participating universities at the camp beyond the University of Alaska, Michigan Tech, and now Southern University. "It's a great educational opportunity to understand the environment, the BLM and why we manage land, and to be involved in cutting-edge climate change in Alaska."

Stubblefield would like the Bering program to grow, too, and says he will do his part by coming back next year with more students and funding. He said the recent expedition will have a tremendous impact on the research currently underway at Southern University.

–Danielle Allen, Alaska State Office
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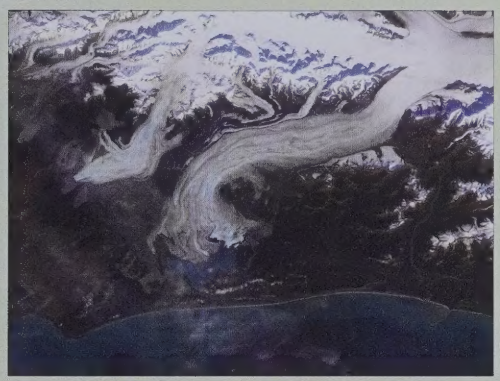
Bering Glacier factoid

The Bering Glacier is a unique BLM-managed area in coastal Southcentral Alaska near Cordova. The glacier is bounded on the north by the Wrangell-St. Elias Mountains and in the south by the Gulf of Alaska. The Bering Glacier, at almost 1.3 million acres and 118 miles long, is the largest and longest glacier in North America! Unique plants and animals have evolved from this area as a result of the dynamic conditions and rugged terrain found with the glacial environment.



NASA Photo

For more information about the Bering Glacier, visit www.beringglacier.org

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Suggestions welcome. Please communicate your ideas for future stories in **BLM-Alaska Frontiers.**

BLM-ALASKA FRONTIERS IS BACK... and with a new managing editor

We're thrilled to be breathing new life into Frontiers and getting this information out to you every three months, after a year-long hiatus.

This 101st issue has news you won't want to miss about the upcoming Iditarod National Historic Trail Centennial celebrations; reflections from BLM-Alaska's director Tom Lonnie on his first year in Alaska; how to take it outside at the new National Recreation Trail to hike and explore at BLM's Campbell Tract; where college students experience glacial research opportunities; how to find your ideal job through seasonal, volunteer, and student positions with BLM-Alaska; tracking land transfers and what's happening with land use planning on BLM-managed public lands; tundra wildfire and how long recovery may take after the fire; how Scouts built new trail bridges; and how goldrush era history is preserved at Steele Creek.

This newsletter involves many more people than those listed in the credits and we're deeply appreciative of their help. This is also for you, so please keep communicating what you'd like to know about BLM-Alaska or see in BLM FRONTIERS. Don't forget to subscribe so you'll keep getting your issues.

As a new BLM employee, I find these stories and the many activities going on with BLM-managed public lands exciting and hope it will give you, as it did me, a sense of wanting to be involved and informed about these public lands where so much is happening all over Alaska.

–Karen J. Laubenstein
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BLM-Alaska Frontiers

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